

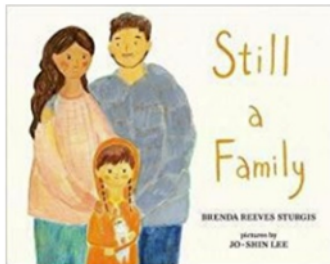


SEEDschool Parent Handout

We are looking to welcoming your child and their class at **SEEDschool** in the coming weeks. As your child's teacher prepares the students in the classroom, there are some things that you can do at home as well to get ready for this week-long experiential learning experience. **SEEDschool** is a unique opportunity to *transform perspectives and shape communities*.

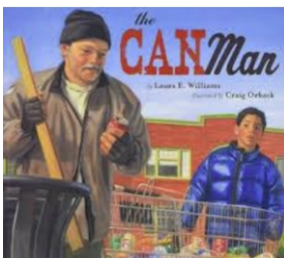
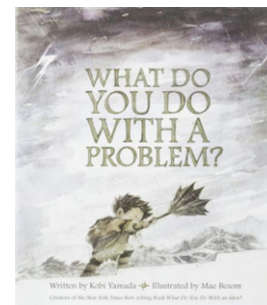
1. Using literature to facilitate discussions around empathy...

There are several high-quality children's picture books as well as juvenile literature that focus on empathy, action and vulnerable individuals. The following are some of the many books that are available to borrow at various *Calgary Public Library* branches that you can use as a jumping off point for some guided discussions at home.



Still a Family (Brenda Reeves Sturgis) – A family has fallen on hard times and are living in different homeless shelters. Even though they are separate, they are still a family.

What Do You Do With a Problem? (Kobi Yamada) – This storybook focuses on a child who isn't sure what to about a persistent problem. When the child finally musters up the courage to face the problem, the problem turns out to be something quite different than it appeared.



The Can Man (Laura E. Williams) – Told with honesty and respect, this timely story shines a perceptive light on current social concerns using the relationship between a young boy and a fellow neighbour who is struggling with poverty. This story highlights the daily hardships some people face.



The One With the Scraggly Beard (Elizabeth Withey) – This book is defined by a simple narrative in which a child’s curiosity and perceptiveness act as a catalysts for understanding fear, suffering and resilience while exploring themes of homelessness, belonging and compassion.

Crenshaw (Katherine Applegate) – Jackson and his family have fallen on hard times. As they struggle to meet their basic everyday needs Jackson has an imaginary friend (Crenshaw the cat) that appears to help him navigate a very difficult time in his life.



2. Using Person First Language...

During SEEDschool, you will notice that our staff talk about or use person first language. At The Mustard Seed we will talk about people experiencing homelessness rather than homeless people. We use this language to signify that we value all people, and that individuals are not defined by their situation. For example, those of us who are housed rarely would identify as a “housed person” and likewise we would choose not to identify those who are not housed by their living situation. Another example: “people live in homeless shelters” not “homeless people live in shelters”. Often just adjusting our language can be a step in a more empathetic direction.

3. Identifying that feeling uncomfortable is not same as being unsafe...

Sometimes children worry that when they visit the Beltline or Downtown Calgary that they will encounter an uncomfortable situation. Seeing individuals experiencing homelessness might be one of those unfamiliar situations. It is important to assure your child that even though they may feel *uncomfortable*, they will not be *unsafe*. Our program has had over two thousand children come through its doors and we have never had an incident of concern around a student, teacher or volunteer being involved in an unsafe situation. In fact, children (and parents who volunteer) often walk away remarking how much they learned, how much fun they had, and that experience was not necessarily what they thought it might be before arriving at SEEDschool.

4. Knowing this will be a transformative week for your child and their class...

After spending a week at SEEDschool, students leave with a better understanding of the vulnerable population and what they can do to be changemakers. Students are engaged in hands-on learning activities about poverty and homelessness with the goal of challenging them to raise awareness about these issues in their own communities.

Students also learn about the vibrancy and diversity of the Calgary Downtown/Beltline, looking at this large part of our city through a new lens.

If you have any question or would like to come for a tour, please send us an email at CommunityEngagement@theseed.ca

We look forward to spending a week alongside your child at SEEDschool!



SeedSchool